

MEMO

TO: Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Ted Harris, Associate Regional Planner, 213-236-1916, harrist@scag.ca.gov

DATE: January 16, 2004

SUBJECT: Draft RTP Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Summary:

Key objectives of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are to enhance public participation in the planning process and to minimize or avoid significant environmental effects. To meet these objectives, staff have extensively disseminated the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), solicited comments, and coordinated with implementing agencies to help facilitate implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.

Public Participation:

The Draft RTP Program EIR was released on December 19, 2003 for a 45-day public review and comment period. Over 2,000 copies have been distributed throughout the region, approximately 100 hard copies to depository libraries in each county and to SCAG's partner agencies, and 1,900 CDs to an extensive mailing list. The document is on SCAG's web page, including an Executive Summary in Spanish. A public hearing for the RTP and the EIR was held on January 15, 2004. The comment period will close on February 9. The Draft RTP comment period has been extended to February 9 to coincide with the comment period for the Draft EIR.

In total, approximately 2,000 Notices of Availability (NOA), which announce that the Draft Program EIR is available for public review, have been distributed to interested organizations and individuals. On December 18, 2003, the NOA was posted with the six county clerks in the SCAG region and published in the following newspapers:

Imperial Valley Press
LA Times
La Opinion
Orange County Register
Press Enterprise
San Bernardino Sun
Ventura County Star

The Draft Program EIR was posted on the SCAG web page on December 18, 2003 and is available at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/peir/draft/2004/index.htm>. Approximately 100 hardcopies of the Draft Program EIR have been delivered to:

Office of Planning and Research (15 copies and a CD)
Select Regional libraries (11 copies—locations are listed on SCAG website)
Subregional Coordinators (14 copies)

MEMO

EEC members (18 copies)
Reviewing agencies (24 copies to CTCs, AQMDs, etc.)
Other organizations and individuals (~10 copies)

Approximately 100 Executive Summaries and CDs of the Program EIR were sent to members of SCAG's Regional Council, Transportation and Communication Committee, and the Community, Economic, and Human Development committee.

Approximately 1,900 CDs were sent to an extensive mailing list, which includes every City's manager, clerk, and planning director, numerous agencies and committees (Regional Transit Task Force, Goods Movement Advisory Committee, etc.), the Indian nations in the SCAG region, cities and counties that border the SCAG region, all NOP (Notice of Preparation) commenters, and commenters to the 2001 EIR, in addition to other groups.

This extensive effort to disseminate the EIR will help foster public participation in the RTP EIR planning process.

Mitigation:

Staff have coordinated with implementing agencies to help determine the feasibility of mitigation measures proposed in the EIR. Staff met with water supply agencies (including the Metropolitan Water District) to discuss anticipated growth in the SCAG region and water supply and demand. Staff provided the agencies with updated demographic information and incorporated information and comments from the agencies in the Draft Program EIR. In addition, Staff met with Caltrans to discuss further opportunities to fund and otherwise support efforts toward regional improvements in water quality. Additional agencies were consulted during the process of developing the Draft Program EIR, including wildlife and energy agencies and companies. This coordination will ultimately help facilitate implementation of mitigation and an effective mitigation-monitoring program.

PILUT RTP EIR Schedule:

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| October 2, 2003 | EEC approved the EIR scope & TCC approved releasing the Draft RTP |
| Nov 6, 2003 | Updated EEC on environmental evaluation of RTP/EIR Alternatives |
| December 4, 2003 | EEC approved release of the Draft Program EIR |
| December 19, 2003 | Released the Draft Program EIR |
| January 15, 2004 | Held joint RTP/EIR Public Hearing |
| February 9, 2004 | Close of Public Comments for Draft RTP and the Draft Program EIR |
| March 4, 2004 | EEC to consider approval of preliminary Response to Comments, Findings, and Overriding Considerations |
| March 15, 2004 | Mail Response to Comments |
| April 1, 2004 | RC to consider certifying the Final PEIR and adopting the 2004 RTP, Findings, and Overriding Considerations |